

# CONSTITUTION REVISION FAQs

***Q: When was this process started and why?***

About three years ago the General Board charged a special committee of involved members with revising our current constitution. The current constitution has served us well the past 10 years. This committee took their assignment very seriously and worked with dedication and commitment for over three years. It became quite clear to them as they worked through the document that the church had changed significantly since the current constitution was put into place. Therefore, instead of minor alterations, the committee undertook a more comprehensive revision, in order to bring the constitution in line with the reality of how the church was operating and to facilitate the fulfilling of our vision – “to be a thriving congregation that changes lives through Christ.”

***Q: What observations motivated the Constitution Committee in developing the new constitution?***

- † We heard a clear desire from committed leaders within the church to reduce the number of meetings and increase the opportunities to serve.
- † We understood that people wanted to serve where their interests were, while not being required to serve in other ways.
- † We wanted to find a way for all the program and ministry leaders (e.g., committee chairs) to sit down a few times a year and brainstorm about the future of the church, without being forced to deal with the business matters of the church.
- † We wanted to change the church calendar to match the flow of the year, instead of changing leadership mid-stream.
- † We wanted to allow people to serve for a significant length of time, while still making sure that time for rest and renewal was built into the process.

***Q: What benefits will be gained by adopting the new Constitution?***

There are numerous benefits the congregation can expect to gain in supporting this new constitution. Some of the biggest benefits include:

- † Committee chairs can focus on leading their committee, without also being required to serve on the General Board.
- † Representatives who serve on the General Board will genuinely want to do so, making that governing body more effective and efficient.
- † The Ministries Council will focus solely on the ministries of the church, while the General Board can focus on the church business, instead of trying to combine the two areas into one meeting.
- † Recruitment of leaders (which will happen in the spring) and preparation for the new church year (which will take place in late summer) will flow more naturally with the calendar year, instead of trying to recruit around the holidays and plan in January and February, when the church year is half over.
- † People can serve up to five years in a leadership positions, providing more continuity, and every leader will get a much-needed sabbatical.

***Q: How is the General Board, which governs the church, different in the new constitution?***

First, it's smaller, reduced from 51 positions to 12. Second, those who serve on the General Board will be representatives from other groups (Elders, Trustees, Ministries Council), so those that serve on the General Board will have a desire to do so. There are also two at-large

positions, allowing anyone from the congregation to serve on the General Board without serving in any other position.

***Q: What are SOPs?***

Standard Operating Procedures define processes and are easier to change than the constitution. Many of these SOPs were formerly in the bylaws, which required a congregational vote to change. An example of an SOP would be the process for committee chairs to get reimbursed for committee expenses.

***Q: What is the Ministries Council?***

This is a group of standing committee chairs who meet four times a year to plan and coordinate church programs, themes, ministries and activities.

***Q: I'm not on any church board or committee. Will the new constitution and by-laws affect me?***

Not much! The only difference you may notice is that there will be two congregational meetings each year instead of one. The meeting in December will approve the budget for the next year. There will be a new meeting in June to elect board members whose terms will now run July to June.

***Q: I'm a committee chair, but do not currently hold an elected position. How will the new constitution and by-laws affect me?***

After the new constitution and bylaws are fully implemented, you will continue to lead your committee and attend quarterly meetings of the Ministries Council. If you are elected as one of the three representatives to the General Board, you will attend those meetings too. Otherwise, you will no longer be required to attend General Board meetings.

***Q: I'm on the Diaconate. How will the new constitution and by-laws affect me?***

Once the new constitution goes into effect, your only responsibility will be to usher and serve communion. Deacons will no longer be required to serve on the General Board.

***Q: When will all these changes take place?***

If the congregation approves it at the Feb. 24 meeting, the new constitution and by-laws will take effect on July 1, 2008. This will begin a period of transition. Currently elected and appointed leaders will continue to serve. Many board members and committee chairs will be asked to serve an extra 6 months to help smooth the transition. As you might expect it will take a couple of years for us to complete this transformation.

***Q: How do I offer an amendment for the Feb. 24 congregational meeting?***

If you would like to offer an amendment to the constitution for the congregational meeting, please submit the amendment in writing to Gill Hogan, General Board chair by Feb. 17. For more detailed instructions, contact Gill or any member of the Constitution Transition Team.